



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

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CONVICTED CHILD SEX TOURIST ORDERED TO PAY RESTITUTION

Award is among the first in a child sex tourism case

SAN DIEGO – A San Diego man convicted of traveling to the Philippines to have sex with a teenage girl was sentenced yesterday to 37 months in federal prison and ordered to pay \$25,000 in restitution to help Filipino victims of child exploitation.

Bernard Lawrence Russell, 38, pleaded guilty in April after admitting he had engaged in illicit sexual conduct with 13 and 14-year-old Filipino girls during trips he took in 2002 to the Philippines. One of Russell's victims described how she was introduced to the San Diego man by a pimp in Manila shortly after Russell arrived in the Philippines in October 2002. After telling Russell that she was 13-years-old, he paid her approximately \$30 to go to a motel and engage in various sexual acts. One of Russell's other victims, a 14-year-old girl, told authorities Russell paid her \$20 to engage in sexual acts with him.

In October 2002, ICE attaché agents in Manila began investigating Russell after authorities in the Philippines reported arresting Russell for allegedly raping a female minor. Videotape found in Russell's possession during his arrest by the Philippine National Police showed two minor females engaged in sexual acts. Agents poured through thousands of airline passenger lists to connect passenger passport information that eventually identified Russell as their target.

"This investigation illustrates the importance of the tremendous cooperation ICE's agents here and overseas have received from our law enforcement counterparts and agencies in the Philippines," said Michael Unzueta, special agent-in-charge for ICE investigations in San Diego.

At the hearing yesterday, United States District Judge John A. Houston finalized an order requiring Russell to pay \$25,000 in restitution. Under an agreement worked out by the U.S. Attorney's Office and ICE, the restitution payments will be overseen by a court-appointed Guardian ad Litem who will work with the Child Exploitation and Obscenity section under the Department of Justice to administer the funds.

The case is part of Operation Predator, an ongoing ICE enforcement initiative to identify, investigate, arrest and, in the case of foreign nationals, deport child sex predators. Since the initiative began in July 2003, ICE agents have arrested more than 6,200 individuals nationwide, including more than 1,600 in California.

ICE encourages the reporting of suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. This hotline is staffed around the clock by investigators. Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.